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Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06

SAM-01 OES-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 PA-01

PRS-01 /104 W
---------- 061997
R 050557Z OCT 76
FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
LTO RUQMGU/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 9619
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8128
AMCONGEN IZMIR
AMCONSUL ADANA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISTANBUL 3909

E. O. 11652: NA
TAGS: BGEN, TU
SUBJ: GASOLINE SHORTAGE IN ISTANBUL

REF: A. ISTANBUL 3182 B. IZMIR 0308

1. SHORTAGE OF GASOLINE IN ISTANBUL BECAME ACUTE DURING PAST WEEK-END.
CARS ARE STILL LINED UP FOR MANY BLOCKS AT THE FEW STATIONS WHERE SOME
GASOLINE STILL AVAILABLE. EARLIER DIFFICULTIES OCCURRED ABOUT SIX
AGO (REF A) BUT PROBLEM EXACERBATED BY RECENT CLOSURE OF REFINERIES FOR
SEVERAL DAYS, WHEN DISK WORKERS WALKED OFF JOB, AS WELL AS BY
CONTINUED DIFFICULTIES AT ALIAGA REFINERY (REF B).

2. NONE OF THE REFINERIES HAVE ANY INVENTORY OF GASOLINE, ACCORDING
TO MARC CASANOVA, MOBIL PRES FOR TURKEY. HE SAID THAT MOBIL HAD
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ADVANCED GASOLINE SUPPLIES TO THE STATE-OWNED TURKISH PETROLEUM

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COMPANY (TPAO) TO HELP MEET EARLIER SHORTAGES IN ISTANBUL AND
IZMIR ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT TPAO WOULD REPAY COMPANY THROUGH
IMPORTS. AT ONE POINT MOBIL HAD ADVANCE MORE THAN 14,000 TONS
AND IS CURRENTLY OWED 8,000 TONS. PART OF PROBLEM ACCORDING TO
CASANOVA IS BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS AND PROCRASTINATION ON NEEDED IMPORTS
OF GASOLINE TO MEET SHORTFALL IN REFIOERY PRODUCTIONS.

3. TPAO SOURCES TOLD CASANOVA THEY EXPECT A ROMANIAN TANKER WITH
20,000 TONS TO ARRIVE ANY DAY AND MOBIL HOPES TO RECEIVE SOME
SUPPLIES
FROM THIS SHIPMENT UNDER ITS PAYBACK AGREEMENT. IN ADDITION, A MOBIL
TANKER FROM THE ATAS REFINERY IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN ISTANBUL IN
THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS. THE GENERAL EXPECTATION IS THAT THE GASOLINE
SITUATION WILL RETURN TO "NORMAL" HERE BY THE WEEKEND.

4. FOR THE LONGER TERM CASANOVA SEES PERIODIC GASOLINE SHORTAGES
OCCURRING OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS (CREATED BY DISTRIBUTION
PROBLEMS AND DELAYS IN IMPORTS) UNTIL ALIAGA RESUMES PRODUCTION
AND INVENTORIES ARE REBUILT. HE ALSO BELIEVES THE RECENT STRIKE
HAD A MORE SERIOUS IMPACT THAN TPAO OFFICIALL ADMIT. MOBIL IS
TRYING TO BE HELPFUL BUT IS HAVING DIFFICULT OBTAINING FIRM INFO-
RMATION ON CURRENT SITUATION OF THE TWO GOVERNMENT REFINERIES. CASA-
NOVA SAID SOME REPORTS INDICATE THAT DISK WORKERS BEFORE WALKING
OFF THE JOB POISENED CATALYST AT ALIAGA REFINERY NEAR IZMIR BY
THROWING LEAD IN IT. IF THIS OCCURRED HE SAID
REFINERY WOULD BE DOWN TWO MONTHS FOR A COMPLETE CHANGE OF THE
CATALYST. HE FELT THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT OF A TWO MONTH
CLOSURE (REF B) GAVE SOME CREDENCE TO THESE REPORTS.

5. CASANOVA NOTED THAT ATAS REFINERY AT MERSIN, IN WHICH MOBIL HAS
MAJORITY OWNERSHIP, IS RUNNING AT FULL CAPACITY (100,000 BPD),
WHEREAS TPAO'S IPRAS REFINERY IN IZMIR IS PRODUCING AT ABOUT 60
PERCENT OF CAPAPCITY (1000,000 BPD). PROBABLY BECAUSE OF
TECHNICAL PROBLEMS. LACK OF PRODUCTION AT ALIAGA REFINERY
(60,000 BPD CAPACITY) IS DEPRIVING COUNTRY OF ALMOST 25 PERCENT OF
ITS REFINERY CAPACITY. TURKEY'S ONLY LUBE OIL PLANT WHICH IS
DEPENDENT ON ALIAGA APPARENTLY HAS ALSO SHUT DOWN. WHEN CONGEN
OFFICER QUERIED CASANOVA ON FOREIGN EXCHANGE COST RESULTING FROM
RECENT DIFFICULTIES, HE SAID TURKISH GOVERNMENT ESTIMTES
IT AT ABOUT TL 300 MILLION, BUT INDICATED THAT IN HIS JUDGMENT
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THE AMOUNT WOULD BE QUITE A BIT MORE.
BATJER

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